

Afghanistan

Selected Statistics and Indicators on Child Labor¹⁷

Working children, 5-14 years (%):	-
Working boys, 5-14 years (%):	-
Working girls, 5-14 years (%):	-
Working children by sector, 5-14 years (%):	
- Agriculture	-
- Manufacturing	-
- Services	-
- Other	-
Minimum age for work:	15
Compulsory education age:	Secondary level
Free public education:	Yes
Gross primary enrollment rate (%), 2005:	101
Net primary enrollment rate (%):	-
School attendance, children 5-14 years (%):	-
Survival rate to grade 5 (%):	-
ILO-IPEC participating country:	No

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Children in Afghanistan work as street vendors, shopkeepers, workshop assistants, blacksmiths, tailors, domestics, auto mechanics, carpet weavers, and in brick factories.¹⁸ Children as young as 4 or 5 years old have been reported working.¹⁹ In the cities, some children collect paper and scrap metal, shine shoes, and beg. In rural areas, many children work in agriculture.²⁰ Because of limited family incomes, many parents encourage their children to beg or work.²¹ Years of conflict have left many families parentless and with child-headed households, thus forcing the children to work.²²

Afghanistan is a country of origin and transit for children trafficked internally and to Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Zambia, and Zimbabwe for forced labor as child soldiers, forced begging, commercial sexual exploitation, or debt bondage in the carpet and brick industries.²³

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The law sets the minimum age for employment at 15 years, although with parental approval, children may be employed at 14 years and may be hired as trainees at 13 years.²⁴ Children 16 to 18 years may only work 35 hours per week, and children under age 16 are only permitted to work 30 hours per week. The law does not permit children to be engaged in underground work or in conditions that are physically arduous or harmful to their health.²⁵ Working children under 18 years are entitled to 30 days paid vacation annually.²⁶ Enforcement is made difficult due to a lack of formal birth registrations and the concentration of child labor in the informal sector and agriculture, which are not covered by the labor law.²⁷ According to USDOS, the Government lacks the capacity to enforce child labor laws, and there is no evidence of effective enforcement of child labor laws in Afghanistan.²⁸

The Constitution prohibits forced labor.²⁹ Until new laws are enacted, trafficking crimes may be prosecuted under laws dealing with kidnapping, rape, forced labor, transportation of minors, child endangerment, and hostage taking. Prison sentences for such offenses are longer for cases involving minors and girls.³⁰ The minimum age for recruitment into the Armed Forces is 18 years.³¹

Between 40 and 70 arrests of child traffickers were made by the Ministry of the Interior in 2007.³² USDOS reports that law enforcement officials are often complicit in trafficking offenses.³³

Current Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

In collaboration with UNICEF, the Government oversees a National Plan of Action to Combat Child Trafficking that sets goals and timelines for reducing the number of children vulnerable to trafficking.³⁴ The Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs, and Disabled, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of the Interior, are administering the National Strategy on the Protection of Children at Risk. This includes a separate chapter on the worst forms of child labor, with a focus on street children.³⁵ The Government

of Afghanistan provided land for IOM to build a shelter housing child trafficking victims in March 2007.³⁶ The Government also gave assistance to 400 victims of child trafficking after their return from Pakistan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Zimbabwe by providing shelter, education, health care, and when possible, reunification with their families.³⁷ A large trafficking awareness campaign was initiated by the Government with assistance from UNICEF in 2007.³⁸

The Government has established 16 vocational training centers throughout the country. Between 2003 and 2006, the last date for which data is available, 12,000 unemployed youth and street children participated in training programs such as computer skills, English language, carpentry, carpet weaving, and tailoring.³⁹

The Government participated in a USDOL-supported USD 5.27 million 4-year project (2003-2007) in which UNICEF worked to demobilize and reintegrate former child soldiers and war-affected youth. The project withdrew 9,463 children and prevented 3,151 children from child soldiering and other forms of exploitive child labor.⁴⁰ The Government is participating in a USAID-funded USD 385,000 anti-trafficking project implemented by the Asia Foundation. The project will provide training for vulnerable groups, as well as health care workers, religious leaders, and teachers to prevent trafficking. The Government is also participating in a USDOS-funded USD 277,100 anti-trafficking project implemented by IOM. The project will create links between the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the media in order to facilitate anti-trafficking media campaigns. The project will also provide referral services for victims of trafficking.⁴¹

¹⁷ For statistical data not cited here, see the Data Sources and Definitions section. For data on ratifications and ILO-IPEC membership, see the Executive Summary. For minimum age for admission to work, age to which education is compulsory, and free public education, see Government of Afghanistan, *Labour Code*, (June 11, 1987), article 20; available from <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/SERIAL/6702/69052/F2057053744/AFG6702.pdf>. See also U.S. Embassy- Kabul, *reporting*, September 14, 2005. See also U.S. Department of State, "Afghanistan," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2007*, Washington, DC, March 11, 2008, section

5; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100611.htm>. See also Government of Afghanistan, *Constitution*, (January 4, 2004), article 43; available from http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/af00000_.html. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Afghanistan," section 5. See also Anita Anastacio and Dawn Stallard, *Report Card: Progress on Compulsory Education, Grades 1-9*, the Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium, March 2004, 1.

¹⁸ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Afghanistan," section 6d. See also Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Afghanistan: Thousands of Child Labourers in Eastern Province Deprived of Education", IRINnews.org, [online], May 10, 2007 [cited March 17, 2008]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportID=72062>. See also Government of Afghanistan, *Information on elimination of worst forms of child labor in Afghanistan*, December 30, 2007. See also U.S. Embassy- Kabul, *reporting*, December 13, 2007. See also Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, *Situation of Child Labour in Afghanistan Research Report*, 2006, 3, 12; available from http://www.aihrc.org.af/rep_child_labour_2006.pdf.

¹⁹ Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, *Situation of Child Labor in Afghanistan*, 15.

²⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Afghanistan," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2006*, Washington, DC, March 6, 2007, section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78868.htm>. See also Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Afghanistan: UNICEF Expresses Concern about Child Labour", IRINnews.org, [online], December 6, 2005 [cited March 18, 2008]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=50528&SelectRegion=Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN>. See also Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, *Situation of Child Labor in Afghanistan*, 13.

²¹ U.S. Embassy- Kabul, *reporting*, December 13, 2007.

²² A. B. Popal, *Child-Labor or Breadwinner*, UN-Habitat, October 8, 2004; available from <http://www.fukuoka.unhabitat.org/project/voice.php?sn=8&cn=2&la=1>.

²³ U.S. Department of State, "Afghanistan (Tier 2)," in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2007*, Washington, DC, June 12, 2007; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2007/>. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Afghanistan," section 5. See also U.S. Embassy- Kabul, *reporting*, September 14, 2005. See also Government of Afghanistan, *Information on elimination of worst forms of child labor in Afghanistan*.

²⁴ Government of Afghanistan, *Labour Code*, articles 20, 21.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, article 49. See also U.S. Embassy- Kabul, *reporting*, September 14, 2005.

²⁶ Government of Afghanistan, *Labour Code*, article 62.

²⁷ U.S. Embassy- Kabul, *reporting, December 13, 2007.*

²⁸ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Afghanistan," section 6d. See also U.S. Embassy- Kabul, *reporting, September 14, 2005.*

²⁹ Government of Afghanistan, *Constitution*, article 49.

³⁰ U.S. Embassy- Kabul, *reporting*, March 12, 2004. See also U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2007: Afghanistan."

³¹ UNICEF, *Demobilization of Child Soldiers and Socio-Economic Reintegration of War-affected Young People in Afghanistan*, Technical Progress Report, Kabul, February 28, 2007.

³² U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Afghanistan," section 5.

³³ U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2007: Afghanistan." See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2007: Afghanistan," section 5.

³⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2007: Afghanistan."

³⁵ Government of Afghanistan, *Information on elimination of worst forms of child labor in Afghanistan*. See also U.S. Embassy- Kabul, *reporting, December 13, 2007.*

³⁶ U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2007: Afghanistan."

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Integrated Regional Information Networks,

"Afghanistan: Children Work the Streets to Support Families", IRINnews.org, [online], January 16, 2007 [cited December 10, 2007]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=64363>.

⁴⁰ UNICEF, *Demobilization of Child Soldiers and Socio-Economic Reintegration of War-affected Young People in Afghanistan*, 10. See also Vera Chrobok, *Demobilizing and Reintegrating Afghanistan's Young Soldiers: A Review and Assessment of Program Planning and Implementation*, Bonn International Center for Conversion, Bonn, 2005, 39; available from <http://www.bicc.de/publications/papers/paper42/paper42.pdf>. See also UNICEF, *Demobilization of Child Soldiers and Socio-Economic Reintegration of War-affected Young People in Afghanistan*, technical progress report, September 2005, 5. See also UNICEF, *Demobilization of Child Soldiers, technical progress report*, 5. See also USDOL, *Demobilization of Child Soldiers and Socio-economic Reintegration of War-affected Young People in Afghanistan*, ILAB Technical Cooperation Project Summary, Washington, DC, 2008.

⁴¹ U.S. Department of State, *USG Funds Obligated in FY 2007 for TIP Projects*, [online] February 2008 [cited March 14 2008], 15; available from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/101403.pdf>.

Albania

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Children in Albania can be found working as farmers, shepherds, shoe cleaners, car washers, textile workers, and shop vendors. Reports also indicate that children work as drug runners.⁴² Children, including those under 16, also work in construction. In Bater, Bulqiza, Borje, and Klos, children of 16 and 17 years work in chromium mines.⁴³ Roma children are forced to work on the streets as beggars and vendors.⁴⁴ The majority of all children working on the streets are boys, whereas the majority of children working in the formal sector are girls.⁴⁵

Children are trafficked internally from all regions to Tirana and Durrës; children are also trafficked externally to Kosovo and Greece for sexual exploitation and begging.⁴⁶ The number of children

trafficked from Albania may be falling, but internal trafficking is reported to be rising. Due to poverty, Roma children are especially vulnerable to exploitation. Some children, especially Roma children and children residing in orphanages, have been kidnapped or sold by family members to traffickers.⁴⁷

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The law sets the minimum age of employment at 16 years, but numerous regulations restrict the working conditions of children under the age of 18. Exceptions exist for children 14 to 18 years to do light work during school vacations and for children 14 to 16 years to participate in vocational training programs.⁴⁸ Night work is prohibited for all children younger than 18 years, and their work is